

# The Role Of Community Habits In Developing Elementary School Students Social Awareness As A Form Of Strengthening Character Education

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**Abstract.** This study aims to analyze the role of social habits in developing social awareness in elementary school students as part of efforts to strengthen character education. The background of the study stems from the importance of instilling social values such as mutual assistance, mutual help, and cooperation as the foundation for character formation in students in the modern era that tends towards individualism. This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational method involving 30 fifth-grade students at Cileungsir Public Elementary School, Petir District, Serang Regency. Data were collected through social habits questionnaires, social awareness questionnaires, and observations of student behavior during school activities. Data analysis was conducted using a Pearson correlation test to determine the relationship between social habits and levels of social awareness. The results showed a significant positive relationship between social habits and students' social awareness ( $r = 0.743$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This means that the more social habits students practice, the higher their level of social awareness. This finding confirms that instilling social values through mutual assistance, cooperation, and helping each other can strengthen students' empathy, sense of responsibility, and social participation. This study recommends that schools systematically integrate social habits through character education strengthening programs and school community involvement, thereby fostering a generation of students with character, caring, and contributing positively to their social environment.

**Keywords:** social habits, social awareness, character education, elementary school.

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## INTRODUCTION

Character education is the primary foundation for shaping students' personalities, fostering integrity, empathy, and concern for others and their environment. In the context of basic education, character development must begin early because this phase is crucial for shaping students' behavior and social habits. According to (Susanti, 2022) character education emphasizes the development of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, which are interrelated in shaping individuals with good character. In Indonesia, the Strengthening Character Education program places the value of mutual cooperation as one of the main pillars in building a generation with morals, independence, and social awareness (Kemendikbud, 2017) Amidst increasingly complex globalization and social change, the phenomenon of declining solidarity and increasing individualism poses a challenge for education. Changes in social interaction patterns due to digital technology have led some students to focus more on individual activities and less on social cooperation (Marwanda et al., 2025). This emphasizes the importance of strengthening social values based on the culture of mutual cooperation as part of Indonesian identity (Mawardi et al., 2024). This condition is also seen at SDN Cileungsir, Petir District, Serang Regency, Banten. Based on initial observations, several problems

related to student social behavior were found, such as low involvement in class community service activities, a lack of initiative to help friends experiencing learning difficulties, and the emergence of individualistic behavior when carrying out group activities. Furthermore, there is a tendency for some students to prefer playing with gadgets after school hours rather than engaging in social interactions with their surroundings. The social conditions of the community that are starting to be influenced by their original culture and the decline of the tradition of mutual cooperation in the neighborhood also affect students' social habits. This phenomenon indicates the need for educational strategies that can revitalize the values of social awareness through community habituation activities in schools. One effective strategy in developing students' social awareness is through community habituation, which includes mutual cooperation activities, helping each other, social participation, and concern for the school environment. Community habituation not only shapes character through role models and real practices, but also represents a social learning process that aligns with social learning theory, where prosocial behavior is formed through direct experience and observation of the surrounding environment. In the elementary school context, student involvement in social activities can develop empathy, cooperative attitudes, and social responsibility (Virnanda et al., 2025). Although various studies have discussed character education and the value of mutual cooperation in the Indonesian school context, research specifically analyzing the relationship between social habits and the level of social awareness of elementary school students, especially in rural areas, is still limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of social habits in increasing social awareness of elementary school students as a strategy to strengthen character education. The findings of this study are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in the development of social habituation programs based on local wisdom and school communities, thereby shaping the profile of students who have character, care, and contribute positively to their social environment.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used a quantitative approach with a correlational method to determine the relationship between social habits and social awareness of elementary school students. The study was conducted at SDN Cileungsir, Petir District, Serang Regency, Banten in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The subjects were all 30 fifth-grade students of SDN Cileungsir. The sampling technique used total sampling because the population was less than 100 students. The instrument used a Likert scale questionnaire 1–4 compiled based on indicators of elementary school students' social behavior and social learning theory. Aspects of social habits include mutual cooperation, helping each other, cooperation, and social

participation. Aspects of social awareness include empathy, helping attitude, cooperation, and social responsibility. Data were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test. Before conducting the correlation analysis, assumption tests were conducted in the form of normality and linearity tests. The test criteria were that the results were declared significant if the p value <0.05.

## RESULTS

The study involved 30 fifth-grade students at Cileungsir Elementary School. The descriptive analysis results showed that the average scores for social habits and social awareness were in the high category.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics

Variabel	Mean	Category
Social Habits (X)	83,2	High
Social Awareness (Y)	85,6	High

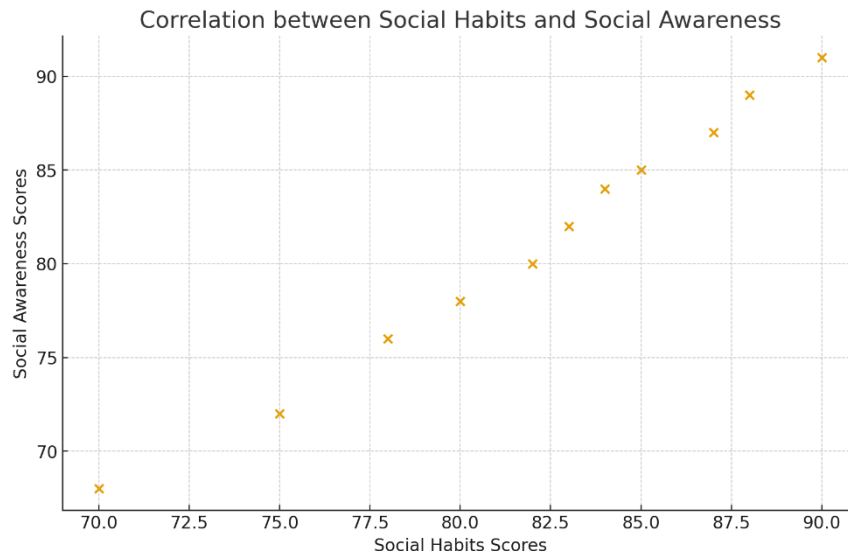
This indicates that students have a positive tendency to practice social values such as mutual cooperation, cooperation, and mutual assistance within the school environment. The Pearson correlation test was used to determine the relationship between social habits and students' social awareness.

**Table 2.** Correlation Test Results

Analysis	Value
Correlation Coefficient (r)	0,743
Significance (p-value)	0,000 < 0,05
Category	Strong and Significant Relationship

The results indicate a strong and significant positive relationship between social habits and social awareness. This means that the better students' social habits, the higher their level of social awareness. The results show a strong and significant positive relationship between social habits and social awareness. This means that the better a student's social habits, the higher their level of social awareness.

The descriptive results show high mean scores for both variables, indicating that students generally demonstrate strong social habits and awareness.



## DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that social habits have a strong influence on elementary school students' levels of social awareness. This finding is relevant to Bandura's (1986) social learning theory, which states that individual behavior is shaped through experiences and observations in their social environment. Students who are accustomed to working together, helping friends, and participating in social activities at school are more likely to demonstrate empathy and concern. Culturally, the study's findings also align with the value of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) as a characteristic of Indonesian society (Widaty, 2020). In the context of Cileungsir Elementary School, activities such as class duty, community service, and helping each other in learning have been shown to play a role in shaping students' social character. This finding is supported by research (Rohmah et al., 2023) which states that the practice of instilling social values in elementary schools effectively increases students' prosocial behavior and sense of responsibility. Furthermore, research (Minarni et al., 2024) also found that habituating cooperation and social activities in schools can improve students' empathy and social awareness. Character education is a systematic process to shape students' personalities by strengthening moral, ethical, and social values in everyday life. (Adiputra<sup>1</sup> et al., 2025) emphasized that character education encompasses moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action as integral parts of developing students' character. Social habits are the process of internalizing social values that occurs through the practice of living together, working together, and engaging in social activities. Social habits are formed through ongoing interactions within the family, school, and community (Subiyakto & Mutiani, 2019).

Activities such as mutual cooperation, mutual assistance, and participation in community activities shape sustainable prosocial behavior (Nuranasmitha et al., 2025). Social awareness refers to an individual's ability to understand the conditions of others, feel empathy, and demonstrate behaviors that support social welfare. (Syafitri, 2020) explains that empathy is the foundation of altruistic actions and prosocial behavior. In elementary school students, social awareness can be observed through helping friends, sharing, cooperating, and caring for the environment.

Previous research has shown that the instilling of social values in schools has a positive effect on students' prosocial and caring behavior (Dianah, 2024). Thus, social habits are an important foundation for strengthening character education and developing a generation with caring character in the modern era. Several factors support the high level of social awareness among students at Cileungsir Elementary School (SDN Cileungsir): a school culture that emphasizes mutual cooperation and mutual assistance, teacher support in modeling social attitudes, and the presence of routine activities that involve students in social activities.

However, some students still tend to be individualistic when working in groups or lack initiative in helping friends. Therefore, social awareness needs to be consistently reinforced through school programs and collaboration with parents. Overall, this research confirms that social awareness not only shapes student behavior but also serves as an effective character education medium in developing students with caring character and a culture of mutual cooperation.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate that social habits have a strong and significant influence on the development of social awareness among elementary school students ( $r = 0.743$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This finding confirms that consistent engagement in cooperative behaviors—such as mutual assistance, collaboration, and participation in collective activities—can effectively enhance students' empathy, responsibility, and social participation. These outcomes reinforce the relevance of community-based cultural values, such as *gotong royong*, as a foundation for character building in an era increasingly shaped by individualism. Based on these findings, several practical implications can be recommended for schools and policymakers. First, schools should design and implement structured, community-based character education models that integrate routine social habit activities into daily learning, such as peer mentoring, collaborative class duties, school–community service programs, and cooperative learning strategies. These activities provide real-life environments for students to experience and

internalize prosocial values. Second, teachers and parents must work collaboratively as consistent role models, ensuring that the reinforcement of positive social habits occurs both at school and at home. Schools can initiate parent–teacher partnership programs that focus on shared responsibilities in cultivating empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility. Third, policymakers are encouraged to develop guidelines and policies that support community-driven character education, emphasizing local cultural values and community participation. Educational regulations can promote partnerships between schools and local communities, enabling character education programs that are relevant, contextual, and aligned with the cultural environment in which students grow.

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